

Claudia Bouchard

3/3/17

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RE: Appropriations Committee Budget Testimony on DDS Budget

APPtestimony@cga.ct.gov

This letter is in regards to the budget cuts on existing Family Support Grant Programs and no funding for Community Programs for new graduates with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.

My name is Claudia Bouchard. I live with my family, two wonderful kids and my sister Veronica.

Veronica is a 40 year old woman with Down Syndrome and Mental Retardation. I am her legal guardian, caregiver, sister, friend, and many times she even calls me "mom". She lives with us. She attends a day program two days a week. For me caring for my sister, my children and a job is a full time juggling act that I do every day.

Family Support Grant Programs help support the care of individuals with I/DD. They also help families.

Caring for an individual with I/DD is hard, is a full time job that takes lots of sacrifices, is a job that never ends. And we do it day after day, after day. Family Support Grant Programs help provide a little break so someone else can care for the individuals and we can spend time with our children, family with the freedom not to worry about our I/DD individual for a couple of hours.

Proper funding for new graduates is necessary to continue with the productive pathway that individuals have work hard to accomplish. No funding for new graduates is not acceptable.

We need Family Support Grant Programs and Proper Funding for new graduates.

Sincerely,

Claudia Bouchard